




FORECAST


TODAY MON TUE



62°/55° 72°/62° 76°/67°

Complete forecast, A2

LIFE



Commentary on the world

Sociology professor Andrea Hunt stood stage right of a podium facing two dozen students scattered throughout the large auditorium-style classroom in the communications building on the University of North Alabama campus. The class, the Sociology of Hip Hop Culture, is in its second semester as part of the university's curriculum and has been approved for the spring schedule going forward. **F1**

NATION & WORLD

Trump adviser: Russian meddling 'incontrovertible'

President Donald Trump's national security adviser said Saturday there was "incontrovertible" evidence of a Russian plot to disrupt the 2016 U.S. election. **A4**

WEIRD NEWS

Police rescue men tangled up with mannequin, toy car

BERLIN — Police in western Germany have freed two men who became entangled with a mannequin and a large, remote controlled car. Officers were called after cries were heard from an apartment in the city of Mainz in the early hours of Saturday. Police found the 58-year-old tenant and a 61-year-old visitor "hopelessly locked together" with the toy car and the mannequin — which was dressed in a knight's costume. Officers were able to free the men, who were too drunk to explain how their unfortunate predicament had come about. — *The Associated Press*

ONLINE

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YOUR OPINION

Saturday's question: Which issue should lawmakers begin with reforms?
• **Gun control:** 24.7%
• **Mental health:** 75.3%

Today's question: What is your opinion of the NRA?
Vote at **TimesDaily.com**

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TIMES DAILY

FLORENCE ■ MUSCLE SHOALS ■ SHEFFIELD ■ TUSCUMBIA ■ NORTHWE



Super Saturday: 5 local teams advance to regional finals. **C1**

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RECRUITING RURAL RETAIL FRANCHISES

'There's no magic potion'

By Bernie Delinski
Staff Writer

It became part of Sheffield Mayor Ian Sanford's routine during his early days as mayor. Sanford would call and write restaurant and retail franchises, trying to convince them to consider opening a location in Sheffield. "When I first came here, I had no problem cold calling people," Sanford said. "I'd also send letters



Sanford



Jones



Underwood

but get the standard responses." Those responses often stated the company was not interested, or not expanding at this time.

Sanford said it appeared they simply were brushing him off. That particularly was the case when the response was that the city was too small of a market. Sanford tried to explain that the market is not just Sheffield, but four cities that literally

go from one city limit to the other with no space in between. He would say the Shoals has 140,000 residents in a two-county area. But his pleas were to no avail. Keith Jones, executive director of the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments (NACOLG), said it is a major challenge for small cities and towns to attract retail businesses.

SEE RETAIL, A3

Schools issue warning to parents



The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that the growing brain of a teen is just as likely to be harmed short- and long-term with a vaping device as with any other tobacco product. [AP FILE PHOTO/NAM Y. HUH]

Deceptive vaping devices targeting teens

By Lisa Singleton-Rickman
Staff Writer

Watch out parents: What looks like a common thumb drive may not contain your teen's English research paper at all, but a major dose of habit-forming nicotine or worse. Schools across the country are seeing a rise in the teen

use of deceptively designed electronic cigarettes and vaporizers, or vapes, in form of what looks to be small- to medium-sized flash drives that can be concealed in your hand. The street name for the vaping action with such devices is "JUULing" and the nation's health officials are concerned. The term JUULing is derived from the JUUL company that produces the form of e-cigarettes. The devices are turning up in school hallways, classrooms

and bathrooms. Health officials say many users don't identify their action as vaping, instead opting for the trendier term JUULing. And some teens are using them out in the open, such as in class or in the midst of their peers and teachers during the school day by putting their hand to their mouth pretending to cough. They subsequently blow the vapor down their shirt, under a table or swallow it.

SEE VAPING, A3

Officials don't want anyone missed

By Bernie Delinski
Staff Writer

Florence Mayor Steve Holt refers it is as his 10-year soapbox. Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau surveys the nation to find the populations of municipalities, counties and states. Holt said being undercounted can be extremely harmful to an area. "It's the most important thing we do every 10 years," he said. As the 2020 census nears, officials want to be certain everyone in the Shoals is counted. Holt said Florence's population went down by approximately 400 people in 1990 and again in 2000. He said it is difficult to convince retailers and restaurants to come into a city with those statistics. "The challenge with that is, when you've got a Starbucks or Publix or any other retailer that's looking at you and sees you have a negative growth and there's others in Alabama that have a positive growth, guess where they'll go," Holt said. "In 2010, we actually had growth, which is really, really good, and we needed that. But we need that again in 2020." Local officials say the census affects an area in numerous ways. "If we're not counted properly, Alabama could lose a congressional seat," said Keith Jones, executive director of the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments. "Plus, for every person who's counted, it's worth \$1,630 in federal dollars. Various programs receive funding based on census."

SEE CENSUS, A3

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